

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

In re: :
ETHEREUM VENTURES, LLC, : Docket #1:19-cv-07949-
 : LLS-KHP
 :
Plaintiff, :
 :
- against - :
 :
CHET MINING CO., LLC, et al., : New York, New York
 : September 23, 2021
 :
Defendants. :
 : TELEPHONE CONFERENCE
----- :

PROCEEDINGS BEFORE
THE HONORABLE KATHARINE H. PARKER,
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

APPEARANCES:

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None

E X H I B I T S

<u>Exhibit Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>ID</u>	<u>In</u>	<u>Voir Dire</u>
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None

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2	THE CLERK: -- civil-7949, Ethereum Ventures vs.	
3	Chet Mining Company; the Honorable Katharine H. Parker,	
4	presiding.	
5	Beginning with counsel for the plaintiffs, could	
6	you please make your appearance for the record?	
7	MR. BENJAMIN F. NEIDL: Benjamin F. Neidl, N-e-i-d-	
8	l, from E. Stewart Jones Hacker Murphy for the plaintiff.	
9	HONORABLE KATHARINE H. PARKER (THE COURT): Good	
10	afternoon.	
11	MR. NEIDL: Good afternoon, your Honor.	
12	THE CLERK: And, your Honor, the defendants have	
13	failed to appear for today's conference.	
14	THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.	
15	Just a few things before we begin, since we are on	
16	the phone, I ask that any listeners keep their phones on	
17	mute to eliminate background noise. This call is open to	
18	the press and public on a listen-only basis, and I want to	
19	remind everyone on the call that the Court prohibits others	
20	from recording and rebroadcasting court proceedings.	
21	Violations of this rule may result in sanctions. And the	
22	court is making a recording of this conference, and	
23	Mr. Neidl, if you'd like to order a transcript, you can do	
24	so. It has to be done within three days of today.	
25	MR. NEIDL: Okay. Thank you, your Honor. I'll	

1
2 take that under advisement.

3 THE COURT: So, first, thank you for your
4 submission. I've read through it. I do have a couple of
5 questions. The most important question I have really
6 pertains to computation of consequential damages and how
7 you're arriving at the amount for the consequential
8 damages. I see the chart that was completed for the three
9 and a half months or so of mining that would have been done
10 had the machines been [indiscernible], but I'd like to
11 better understand that.

12 MR. NEIDL: Certainly, your Honor. So on the call
13 with us is John Paul Baric, who is the president of the
14 plaintiff, Ethereum Ventures. Would you allow me to have
15 him explain to you the methodology? He prepared this based
16 on his, you know, his industry knowledge and trade, etc.

17 THE COURT: Sure. Since he is here, why don't we
18 place him under oath? I guess I'll do that. Mr. Baric, do
19 you solemnly swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but
20 the truth, so help you God?

21 MR. JOHN PAUL BARIC: I do.

22 THE COURT: All right, so please proceed. And I
23 have your affidavit and the exhibit up, so if you want to
24 take me through it or explain, that would be helpful.

25 MR. BARIC: Sure, your Honor. I'd like to have

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2 you look at Exhibit K. That's the Excel document that I'll
3 be referencing during this conversation. Do you have that
4 up?

5 THE COURT: Yes, I do.

6 MR. BARIC: So the first thing that I'll take note
7 of on this document is the Machines Purchased. It's in the
8 middle of the document. It says 912 Antminer S9 devices,
9 which is what we purchased from Chet Mining Co. and Chet in
10 the affidavit. If you have any further questions --

11 THE COURT: Where am I looking at that?

12 MR. BARIC: It's in the middle of the page,
13 Machines Purchased; it's underneath that title.

14 THE COURT: Oh, I see, 912 Antminer S9?

15 MR. BARIC: That is correct, your Honor. That is
16 the machines that we purchased from Chet, and it's in the
17 affidavit and the documents in the case.

18 And I'll walk through it if there's any questions.
19 Or if I need to slow down, just let me know, and I'll be
20 happy to stop and explain further.

21 THE COURT: Yes. Before you start explaining the
22 computation, are these particular computers, are they
23 specially configured and the sole purpose is to mine
24 Bitcoins?

25 MR. BARIC: Yes, your Honor. The machines are

classified as an ASIC mining machine. And ASIC chips are the semiconductor chips that these computers have inside of them. They cannot do anything else; they cannot load a web page. They only can mine Bitcoin. And this particular model was made by a manufacturer named Bitman. Antminer S9, and that came out in 2016.

THE COURT: So they connect to the internet, but they can't open a browser? Are they connecting to the Tor internet or something else?

MR. BARIC: No, they're not connected to Tor internet; they're simply connecting to a server. These servers, all they do is computational power, and they do the Bitcoin processing, which is something called the Shaw 256 algorithm. It's the hashing algorithm that Bitcoin is protected by. So these computers specialize in running the math problem to calculate the Bitcoin mining algorithm, and that is under the meta code, and so they can't do anything else. All they do is do those math calculations day in and day out.

THE COURT: And what precisely are they doing by mining; I mean, what is happening?

MR. BARIC: Yeah, so when you're mining as a Bitcoin miner, you are processing new Bitcoin transactions throughout the network, and you're looking for something

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called a new Bitcoin block. So a Bitcoin is a block chain, which means that it's a set of these blocks that are set on top of each other. And in each block there are a set of transactions that happen on the network. And so each cryptocurrency miner, like the Antminer S9, is responsible for securing the network by processing these transactions for everyone. And we get paid out on a steady basis. Everyone on the network gets paid the same amount -- and I'll explain that farther -- but everybody gets paid the same amount per terahash, which is the next line down, that 13.5 terahash. You can think about that as like the miles per hour; it's how fast the car is going. So this is how fast each one of the Bitcoin miners is running or is mining.

THE COURT: The hash rate per machine?

MR. BARIC: That's correct, your Honor. The hash rate is the default speed in measurements that all Bitcoin miners use to compare themselves to each other.

THE COURT: Okay, and that's just -- it's a practicing time?

MR. BARIC: Yes, it's -- it actually stands for a trillion hashes a second; that's what that stands for. It's a terahash.

THE COURT: Got you. Okay.

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MR. BARIC: And, as I mentioned, each computer is doing math, so the hash is a math equation.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BARIC: So if we jump down to the second line, [indiscernible] the hash rate per machine. So we have the 912 machines; then we have each machine generates 13.5 terahashes of hash rate. And that can be seen on the Bitmain website, a link to the right in the Step One; or it can be seen anywhere on the internet where you would Google this model. It would come up with that specification. This is what the manufacturer makes them to, and this is the hash rate they produce.

THE COURT: for this particular machine?

MR. BARIC: Correct, for this particular model made by this particular vendor. And the website is a link to the right there. And there's a lot of places you can check, Amazon, eBay, they all say the same thing for this model.

THE COURT: Okay, all right.

MR. BARIC: The next calculation is going to be the total hash rate. So we're going to multiply the 912 by the 13.5, and we arrive with the 12,312, and that's denominated in terahashes. So that's how many cumulative hashes these machines would be able to compute on a minute-

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by-minute basis.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BARIC: And so now the next thing is -- so you have the two sides of the equation. The first one is the production of the equation; it's just like a simple manufacturing process. The second one is the input, which is the electricity. So Bitcoin miners use -- the only thing they use is electricity. They don't require water or any other types of, you know, raw materials, simply electricity. And now we're going to walk through the yellow section, which highlights how much power and energy is being used when these machines are operating. Again, this information comes from the specs on the website, and we also, you know, have these machines, other machines that we purchased and got delivered from other vendors running on our site, and we can confirm those specs.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BARIC: So the first specification that I'm going to look at is the 1,350 watts per machine in yellow. That's the amount of wattage each machine uses. And since the machines are running 24/7, that is a constant pull of energy. And so when we do the math calculation, we can assume that that is always on. It's like a microwave always running is a way to look at it.

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2 THE COURT: Okay.

3 MR. BARIC: But in order to get paid, they have to
4 always be running from the Bitcoin network.

5 So the next thing we do is we calculate the amount
6 of total watts, which is 912 times -- by 1,350, for about
7 1.2 million watts. And because it's a lot of watts, I
8 simplified it down here to a megawatt, which is a standard
9 unit of measurement in the energy space. And that is a
10 million watts. And so we divided that larger number
11 divided by a million, and we're left with 1.2312 megawatts.

12 THE COURT: Okay.

13 MR. BARIC: Any questions there, your Honor?

14 THE COURT: No. So that's each machine, what it's
15 using by -- over what period of time?

16 MR. BARIC: So that's going to be the total, the
17 1.23 megawatts is almost like 800 houses of actually
18 energy, so it's going to be a lot of energy, and it's 24/7,
19 so it's always the same amount. The computers are always
20 running --

21 THE COURT: Oh, I see. Is this --

22 MR. BARIC: -- and they're -- yes.

23 THE COURT: -- and that's the energy it uses at
24 any given time?

25 MR. BARIC: Exactly. So we're going to get into

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the time. The red is actually all about time, so the red buttons there or boxes is the time calculation. So that's a constant number happening just at any moment of time. And now when we jump into the time section below to calculate the cost of power, you see the cost of power in Iowa, which is where these machines were headed and where we have a facility running, is \$45 per megawatt hour. So for every hour that we spend one megawatt of energy, we're required to pay the local utility there \$45. So effectively for one hour of operation running these machines, we would pay \$45 times 1.2312, so, you know, right around maybe \$50 -- \$55.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BARIC: So what we do now is we times it by 24, the amount of hours in the day, and that's going to be the cost of power per day, which the number is 1,330. And how we got to that number was we took the megawatts, which is that 1.2312 number, we times that by the cost per megawatt hour, which is that \$45 number, and then we times it by 24 because, as I mentioned, it's constantly running all day long. So that's the cost that we incur as a business operating these machines on a daily basis.

THE COURT: Is that -- this is not per machine, though?

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2 MR. BARIC: This is all 912 machines, total. The
3 per-machine cost is going to be right below that at a \$1.45
4 per machine. So if we took that --

5 THE COURT: Okay. That's --

6 MR. BARIC: -- \$1.46 number --

7 THE COURT: That's not what I -- I'm not
8 understanding that because in the yellow you have watts per
9 machine and total megawatts per machine, and then you have
10 cost of power per megawatt. So why wouldn't you include
11 the number of machines in the calculus? In other words,
12 you're going to be using more than the 1.2312 megawatts if
13 you have more than one machine; is that correct?

14 MR. BARIC: So, your Honor, in order to get to the
15 total megawatts, we had to calculate the total watts. Do
16 you see the number above that, the total megawatts?

17 THE COURT: Yes.

18 MR. BARIC: That number was arrived by timesing or
19 multiplying the 1350 by the total amount of machines. That
20 is a cumulative number in yellow.

21 THE COURT: Okay. And so this is the -- the
22 number -- and the number of machines, remind me?

23 MR. BARIC: Nine hundred and twelve.

24 THE COURT: Oh, that's the 912, fine. Okay, got
25 it.

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MR. BARIC: So, your Honor, in order to check the math, you could do 912 times 1.46, which is the cost per day per machine that I have listed right above the lost profit. And that one equaled the 1,330 number.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BARIC: And that's that per-machine cost that you were asking about earlier.

THE COURT: Okay. Fine. I understand.

MR. BARIC: Okay. So now we have the cost of the machine there, and we have the total hash rate. Those are the two important numbers to remember from those calculations. So, and as you see it, we'll start with Section A or Column A on the Excel spreadsheet to the left. The column's title is Hash Price in U.S. Dollars per Terahash.

THE COURT: Yes.

MR. BARIC: As I mentioned earlier, that all terahashes are paid the exact same in the Bitcoin mining network. We were able to understand how much money we would have made because this data is public and is published by a third-party data source and multiple third-party data sources. But the one we selected for this calculation was hashrateindex.com. And they are a mining --

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2 THE COURT: So who was paying you, by the way?

3 MR. BARIC: The Bitcoin network pays us. So
4 Bitcoin --

5 THE COURT: The network?

6 MR. BARIC: -- itself is the one who pays -- yes,
7 it's the one who pays the Bitcoin miners.

8 THE COURT: I see. So if I wanted to buy some of
9 these Antminer machines myself, I would be paid the same
10 rate?

11 MR. BARIC: You would be paid the exact same rate,
12 and that rate changes based on the Bitcoin price and how
13 many other people are mining the Bitcoins.

14 THE COURT: Okay. Got you.

15 MR. BARIC: Yes, and so this third-party data
16 source is from -- their name is Luxor Mining Pools.
17 They're based in Canada, and they're one of North America's
18 largest mining pools. So they work with a lot of Bitcoin
19 miners, and we trust their data and the integrity of their
20 team.

21 So the data they provided us on these different
22 dates -- in fact, in Column B is the date, actually. So
23 you can see on 9/15, so September 15th, it looks like, of
24 2019, we would have made 22 cents, basically, per terahash,
25 so per unit of hash rate. And now if we remember -- does

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that make sense?

THE COURT: Yes.

MR. BARIC: Okay. So now if we take that 22 cents per terahash, we times it by the total has rate, the number in the green, that's going to get us to the total daily revenue. So 12,000 times -- by 22 cents is equal to \$2,711.33, and that's Column C.

THE COURT: Okay. So it's 22 cents per hash; and since you're doing 12,312 hashes a day, that's --

MR. BARIC: That's correct.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BARIC: And then the next, Column D, is the cost, which we talked about earlier, and that's the static cost to run the operation in Iowa at the static price that we just went through. And that number's there, and then we minus it or subtract it from the 2,700 number, and that's how we get the total daily profit on a day-to-day basis.

THE COURT: Okay. It's a nice profit.

MR. BARIC: It is. It's a nice profit. It is a significant investment, you know, but it -- usually Bitcoin miners pay back in about a hundred to two hundred days when they buy them and there's nothing that goes wrong.

The time frame, your Honor, is from May 31st, which is when we calculated the machines should have been

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delivered and gave some leeway there to September 15, 2019, which is when we had to fulfill and had new machines arrive with a new order. So it wasn't for, you know, from when we bought them to now, which would have been much higher. We felt it was -- this was adequate in lost profits to set it for just the time we didn't have the machines and we had to go find new ones to run in our operation.

THE COURT: Okay. So I understand [indiscernible] pretty much. Just out of curiosity, I imagine you have gigantic facility that is heat or cooling -- cool controlled because you've got all these machines running all the time, is that right?

MR. BARIC: That's correct. Our facilities use air cooling; there's no HVAC. And it takes about five percent of the power is used towards cooling.

THE COURT: Okay. So this is not an energy-efficient endeavor.

MR. BARIC: I don't know if I'll comment on the energy efficiency of Bitcoin mining.

THE COURT: It's using a lot of energy, at best.

MR. BARIC: But it does use a lot of energy, but it does bring a lot of high-paying jobs to local, rural communities, and it actually prevents the need for natural gas and coal plants. When everyone is turning on their

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HVAC at four o'clock in rural Iowa, it prevents the need for those plants to turn on because our facility does turn off during those high-profile events when the grid needs more energy. And so we actually act as a battery and can help the community out.

THE COURT: I see. Okay. So I think I understand that. The other question I have pertains to the receipts. You have payments made by Bitcoin. And an example of the receipt would be Exhibit I.

MR. BARIC: Yes. Go ahead.

THE COURT: So this transaction doesn't actually identify your company or the sender company by name. There's just numbers. So how does one know that this is in fact reflecting a transaction between your entity and the defendant entity?

MR. BARIC: Your Honor, so I believe this transaction here in Exhibit I is regarding the purchase of equipment for the invoice in a farther exhibit but not from the vendor Chet Mining Co. but from actually the vendor DB Technology in Exhibit H. Our majority of our transactions with Chet and Chet Mining Co. occurred with a wire system, and those wires I believe are also in this exhibit.

THE COURT: Okay. So how does one know that this actually involves you and the technology; can you tell from

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the face of the --

MR. BARIC: Yes. Yes, you can. So if you look at Exhibit H, your Honor, you'll notice that it says the Bitcoin address on the bottom starts with 3MK. Do you see that, your Honor?

THE COURT: Let's see here.

MR. BARIC: It's on the bottom of the invoice.

THE COURT: I'm looking for it. I mean, I see BTC address, 3MK; is that what you're referring to?

MR. BARIC: Yes, your Honor. That is the DB Technology's receiving address of where they would take Bitcoins. It's almost like their mail address where we would send them a check if we were to mail it to them.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BARIC: So now if we go back to that other exhibit, you'll see that the 3MK was where the funds went to that we sent. And that is shown in the transaction, Exhibit I. It's the third highlighted blue address. So the first address is our address; that's the From address. The second address is the two address with .01 Bitcoins; that's actually going to the Bitcoin miners, because it's a fee we have to -- actually -- sorry about that. The fee is below. The .1001, I'm unsure where that transaction is. But the 56.59 Bitcoins goes to that 3MKZ address. That is

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the Bitcoins we sent. And then you'll notice the next one, the BC1QU is our address, and that's because that's where the money comes back. So in Bitcoin, when you send the transaction, you have to send all the funds, and then the funds that aren't sent to the person are sent back to your main address. So those will come back to us in the From address.

THE COURT: I see. Why would funds come back to you? I don't understand that aspect.

MR. BARIC: That's just how it works. So, like, when it comes to, like, because each Bitcoin transaction, it sends all the Bitcoins out and then it splits them up. Half of them or whatever amount you select goes to the recipient. And then if there's any -- it's called dust -- if there's anything left in the transaction, it goes back to the main person's wallet because that's just how Bitcoin's programmed because on the ledger it has to update it.

THE COURT: So it's a change, if you will?

MR. BARIC: Yes, it's like a -- it's a change; and they debit 56.5 Bitcoins and credit, you know, 1.97 Bitcoins back to us.

THE COURT: Okay. Got it.

Now, in terms of the amount that you're requesting

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as excess purchase price for purchasing alternative machines from the alternative vendor, DB Technology, why was the price so much higher than Chet Mining; were there cheaper options that you could have gone with?

MR. BARIC: Your Honor, that's a great question, and the short answer is no. We did go out into the market, and we found the cheapest option. That's why we ended up purchasing those machines to run the machines in our facility. To answer your question about -- oh, there's a lot of echo -- to answer your question on why the price is higher, it's because you mentioned that that was a very quick return. Bitcoin miners are priced based on the price of Bitcoin at the time of transaction. So sometimes a Bitcoin miner might only be worth the amount quoted here with Chet, and then as time went on, the Bitcoin price during that time period was actually rising by significant amounts, and so the equipment is more valuable to the market. And to the vendors, they increase their price. Similarly in the oil and gas industry, when oil goes up, vendors increase the price of oil wells.

THE COURT: I see. Okay.

So the profits that you're talking about are just purely based on the cost of electricity against what you were paid, a daily rate; you know, what you were paid from

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a daily rate standpoint from the network; is that right?

MR. BARIC: That's correct, your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. This is now a question for your lawyer, I believe. On pages seven and eight of your memorandum of law you cite two different interest rates per day. One is 155.14 and the other one is 156.28 per day. I'm not sure if I'm correctly reading that or were they intended to be the same number or a different number?

MR. NEIDL: I'm sorry, what was the page again, your Honor?

THE COURT: Seven and eight of the memo of law.

MR. NEIDL: Yes, I'm looking right now.

THE COURT: You have a calculation on page two of your affirmation that has 155.14 per day.

MR. NEIDL: Okay. And that's what I see at the bottom of page seven of my memorandum of law, 155.14.

THE COURT: And then eight, I think maybe that's just a typo in the conclusion section.

MR. NEIDL: That is correct. That's a typo. I don't know how I did that, but it's the 155.14.

THE COURT: Okay. So that's the rate you were using, then, the 155.14?

MR. NEIDL: Correct.

THE COURT: Okay.

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MR. NEIDL: Right. That's the one I show my work for in the parentheses at the bottom of page seven.

THE COURT: Right. Okay. Now, you also state in your papers that you paid \$39,970.94 for the second batch of computers -- to the defendant for the second batch of computers it was going to deliver by transferring about 5.69 Bitcoin. As of what date are you getting this value, the date of the transfer or something else?

MR. BARIC: Your Honor, is this regarding page five, section 18, is that correct?

THE COURT: Yes, I believe that's right.

MR. BARIC: Okay, I believe the cash value of Bitcoin was the closing cash value as of May 7, 2019, which is shown in Exhibit 4, which came from Yahoo Finance. And that was on the date of the transaction. I believe that was the either closing cash value or the average price, because Bitcoin is always trading in some sort of range. But we grabbed that from Yahoo Finance, and that's Exhibit 4, I believe.

THE COURT: As of the day of the transaction, when you --

MR. BARIC: Transaction, yes.

THE COURT: Okay. And the same thing for the amount that you received back, that's also the date of

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receipt? You're looking at the value of it based on the day of receipt?

MR. BARIC: That's correct, your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. I think that's all of the questions that I have. I will take this under advisement and prepare a Report and Recommendation as soon as possible. Okay? Anything else --

MR. NEIDL: Thank you, your Honor.

THE COURT: -- anything else you'd like to raise with me?

MR. NEIDL: Nothing on my end, your Honor. No, thank you.

THE COURT: Okay. Appreciate it. Thank you very much. We're adjourned.

(Whereupon, the matter is adjourned.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Carole Ludwig, certify that the foregoing transcript of proceedings in the case of Ethereum Ventures, LLC v. Chet Mining Co, LLC et al, Docket #19-cv-07949-LLS-KHP, was prepared using digital transcription software and is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Signature Carole Ludwig

Carole Ludwig

Date: October 29, 2021